

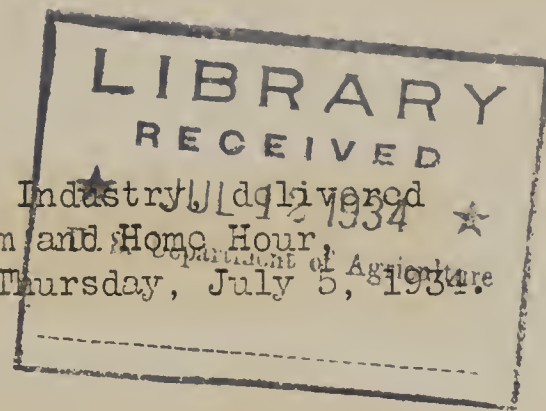
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Thursday, July 5, 1934.



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Thank you Mr. Salisbury and hello farm and home folks. I presume that at this very minute many of you are seated at your dinner tables with the tempting aroma of baked home-cured ham and fresh snap beans or cabbage from your gardens filling the atmosphere. Back in my farming days there was usually about half of an hour just before the dinner bell rang that was the longest part of the day for me. Then would come the welcome clang of that old dinner bell, the unhitching of the team from the plough or the corn cultivator, the side trip to the spring and the watering trough and while the horses were drinking their fill of water from the trough there was a cooling draught of pure, cold water from the spring for me. Then to the barn and dinner for the team and after a short period of rest for me the family gathered around the great dinner table that was loaded with good things to eat and the most of it was grown on the farm.

The neighbors gave my father credit with being a good provider, but I always thought that it was my mother who did most of the providing. It was she who planned for the food supply and who was always looking forward to having plenty for the family and for all those who came to share with us for it was an established rule that no one should go away from our house hungry. It was my mother who diplomatically suggested that a new planting of beans or sweet corn be made, that the early potatoes be dug and turnips planted in their place, that the late potatoes needed cultivating and the strawberry bed required a good renovation.

Things have changed mightily on farms since I was a boy, in fact our whole system of living has changed and I sometimes wonder if, after all, they have changed for the better. If we could retain the real improvements and the labor saving features but go back to the system in vogue some fifty years ago of producing practically our entire living on the farm I think we would all be better off. Back to the days of full smokehouses and storage cellars, and with that thought in mind I want to turn your attention for two or three minutes to the matter of your plan for a full dinner table in 1935. I'm leaving the questions of home-cured meats, poultry and dairy supplies to my associates on the Farm and Home Hour who cover those lines of production. My line is fruits and vegetables and I am interested in helping you with your plan to provide plenty of good, fresh fruits and vegetables for your home dinner tables.

No doubt many of you enjoyed your home-grown strawberries this season but right now is the time to look after the strawberry patch and get it in shape to produce a crop next year. Those of you who grow the overbearing strawberries should remember that the buds which produce the fall crop are formed during July and that these buds will not form unless the plants are kept in a vigorous growing condition. The energy which produces the tender shoots of asparagus and the brittle stalks of rhubarb is stored in the roots of those plants during the summer months and clean cultivation and fertilizing are necessary in order that the plants may lay up reserve energy. In this

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connection it is important that the asparagus plants be protected from the asparagus beetle by either spraying or dusting them at frequent intervals with some arsenical poison.

Right now is the time for you to be making your plans for next year's garden, to set aside an extra piece of land, to grow some soil improving crop upon it or better still to give it a heavy dressing with well rotted manure to add humus and enrich the soil. Many of our gardening failures are due to our failure to properly prepare the soil. The great problem that confronts most of us is that of moisture control and you simply can not control the soil moisture without plenty of humus or organic matter in the soil. Plant some cover crop on the land where you expect to have your main plantings of sweet corn and potatoes next year, that is if you live in the regions which normally have natural rainfall, but if you live out in the region where the rainfall is normally light summer fallowing and conserving the moisture is the best plan to follow.

There is another matter that we should not overlook and that is the saving of choice garden seeds. Of course most of us will go to the seedsmen for the greater part of our garden seeds but you may have some extra fine tomatoes for example and so it may pay you to select a dozen or so of the choicest fruits, let them get full ripe then cut through the center of each fruit and squeeze the seeds and pulp into a jar and let them stand 12 to 25 hours in their own juice to slightly ferment. Then you can easily wash the seeds by running several changes of water over them. The pulp will all float off and the seeds settle to the bottom then drain off the water and spread the seeds on a piece of cheesecloth or thin muslin and dry them in the shade but where they will get plenty of air. Seeds of choice melons, cucumbers, squashes, snap beans, lima beans, sweet corn and many other vegetables may be saved at home and this will be another start toward a good garden and a full dinner table next season.